

## Yes or No? A Parable of Two Sons

Theme: Faithfulness in our service to God and to others. Proper 21 (26) Year A

Object: A rake and some trash bags

Scripture: The Parable of the Two Sons: Matthew 21:28-32

Has your mother or your father ever asked you to help out around the house by doing some chores? I'm sure that has probably happened to you. This morning I am going to tell a story about a father who had two sons named John and William. One day dad walked into John's room to find him building a model airplane. "John, we had a lot of wind last night and there are leaves scattered all over the yard. Would you please rake the leaves and put them in these trash bags?" dad asked.

"Aw Dad, I don't have time to rake the leaves. I am working on this model airplane and I really want to finish it today," John answered.

The father turned and left the room and went to look for William. He found William watching TV. "William, there are a lot of leaves in the yard. Would you please rake the leaves and put them in these bags?" dad asked.

"Sure, I'd be glad to," William answered.

"Great!" said dad. "I'll leave the rake and the trash bags in the yard."

After his father left, John began to think about what he had asked him to do. "I can rake the leaves and still have plenty of time to finish my model airplane later," John thought to himself. He went outside and began raking the leaves.

When dad returned home, he saw John raking leaves. "Where is William?" dad asked.

"I don't know. The last time I saw him he was watching TV," John replied.

When dad went into the house, guess what he saw? There sat William, still watching TV! I wonder which of the two sons pleased his father? John, who said he wouldn't rake the leaves, but did -- or William, who said he would rake the leaves, but didn't?

In our Bible lesson today, Jesus told a similar story to show how different people obey what God has called them to do. In Jesus' parable of the two sons, the father asked both sons to go and work in his vineyard. Just as the two boys in my story, one son answered, "No," but went and worked. The other son answered "yes" did not go. In telling the story, Jesus wanted us to realize that what we do is more important than what we say we will do. Jesus wants us to answer, "Yes," when he tells us to "Love one another," but what he really wants is for us to love one another! Jesus wants us to answer, "Yes," when he says, "Follow me," but what he really wants is for us to follow him! That's the kind of child I want to be. Isn't it the kind of child you want to be?

Father, sometimes we say, "Yes," but our actions say, "No." Help us to be faithful to do what you have called us to do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### Activities

**I WILL" GAME:** Divide the children into teams and have them line up one behind the other. The teacher or another leader will give each team an action to perform and the player at the front of the line will shout out, "I WILL" and then they will run to the finish line and perform the action and then run back to their team. A new command will be given to the next player and the game will continue until all children have had a turn. No one wins except to learn and to have fun saying, I WILL!

**JUST SAY YES!:** The teacher will first ask children questions that will require a YES answer. The children will shout "YES" after each question. Let children take turns then to ask each other YES

questions. After the children have answered several questions, they will be given a sheet of paper and markers to write YES as many times as they can before a buzzer rings or until the teacher says NO! Tell children to now write JESUS anywhere on the sheet where they can fit the words!

**FOLLOW ME:** At the chalkboard, the teacher will tell the children to "follow" what he/she does on the board. The children will have a piece of paper and markers, or they can write in the AIR as the teacher writes and they can see who can figure out what the teacher is writing. The teacher will begin by just doing one section at a time of each letter of YES, I WILL OBEY JESUS! (Ex... there would be 3 sections of the "Y", 4 sections of the E, 3-5 for the S, etc). When a child knows what the teacher is writing or children can see the letters forming on their paper after copying what the teacher is doing, they will shout out, YES I WILL OBEY JESUS!

**BACK WRITING:** Let the children divide into pairs. The children will write with their fingers a secret message on the back of their partner. Write choices for messages on the chalk board, such as, JUST SAY YES TO JESUS, I WILL OBEY, FOLLOW JESUS, LOVE ONE ANOTHER, I WILL, etc. After one child has guessed the secret message, the children will reverse roles.

**"LEAVES" MESSAGES:** Let the children cut out and glue several leaves to a brown piece of construction paper. Write messages on the leaves from today's story, such as SAY YES TO JESUS, FOLLOW JESUS, LOVE ONE ANOTHER, OBEY, FAITHFUL, etc.

**BEE FAITHFUL CRAFT:** Give the children supplies to draw bees on their construction paper. Give them felt for the bodies and little chenille wires for the antennae. Glitter could be used for the bee's bodies as well. Give the children words from our lesson today to write on their Bee, and write "BEE" faithful, "BEE" loving, "BEE" following, "BEE" obeying, "BEE" loving, "BEE" willing! Write Matt 21: 28-32 at the bottom!

**FAITHFUL BANNER:** Give the children a very LONG and narrow piece of paper across the classroom table. Children will each take a word to write on the long banner for FAITHFUL TO DO WHAT JESUS CALLS US TO DO! Others can add a border of happy faces and small words around the edges that could say, I WILL, OBEY, LOVE, FOLLOW, WILLING, etc!

## Jesus Asks a Riddle



**Theme:** Jesus stumps the chief priests and elders with a riddle. Proper 21 (26) Yr. A

**Object:** A sponge, a hand towel, and a glove.

**Scripture:** Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?" Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism -- where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?" Matthew 21:23-25 (NIV)

Do you like riddles? I have some riddles to ask you this morning. They aren't too difficult, but you will have to think a little. I will tell you this, I have the answer to each and every riddle right here in my bag -- and it will be something you have all seen before.

Here is the first riddle. What holds water even though it is full of holes? If you think you know, raise your

hand. I have the answer right here in my bag. It is a sponge!

I have another riddle for you. What gets wet when it is drying? Surely someone will guess this one. It is a towel!

I have one more riddle. Now listen very closely. When I am filled, I can work or play; when I am empty, I do nothing all day. What am I? That's a hard one, isn't it? It's a glove. With your hand inside, it can do many things, but when it is empty, it can do nothing.

I think Jesus must have liked riddles too. Sometimes he used a riddle to teach people a lesson. One day Jesus was teaching in the temple. The priests and elders of the temple didn't believe that Jesus was the Son of God and they were upset because he had been performing miracles.

"Who gave you the authority to do these things?" they asked Jesus.

Jesus said, "I will ask you a question and, if you can answer me, then I will answer you. Here's my question. Did the baptism of John come from heaven or from men? Where did he get his authority?"

The priests couldn't answer Jesus' riddle. If they said it was from heaven, Jesus might ask them why they didn't believe John when he said that Jesus was the son of God. And if they said it was from men, the people would turn against them because they believed that John was a prophet of God.

The only way they could answer was, "We don't know."

Well, maybe the priests and elders didn't know who gave Jesus the authority to perform miracles, but we do. It was God, his Heavenly Father!

Dear Lord, we thank you for sending us Jesus, your only Son. And we thank you that you gave him the power and authority to do all things. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

In this lesson, the chief priests and elders of the temple questioned the authority of Jesus to perform miracles. The goal of these activities is to help the children understand the concept of authority and that just as Jesus received authority from the Father, when we go in Jesus' name, we go with his authority.

**SIMON SAYS:** Play this game as the old SIMON SAYS game of having a leader tell the children to hop, skip, jump, or any other directions and the children will DO what Simon says, but otherwise they should NOT do the command. Explain to the children that Simon is the one who has the authority in this game, just as God is the authority in our life.

**MOTHER MAY I:** In this old game, the children will listen to a command but BEFORE obeying, they must say MOTHER MAY I? If they do the command without asking, they are out of the game. Point out that "Mother" is the authority in this game.

**AUTHORITY BUTTONS:** Give each child a piece of colorful card-stock and round button-sized circles of paper. Each circle can be colored and decorated to look like a button and one letter of the word, "A-U-T-H-O-R-I-T-Y", can be traced on each round button circle. Glue these buttons to the heavier paper and hang on the wall to remind children of God's authority. Other words from today's lesson could be used in place of Authority, as teacher desires.

**AUTHORITY BOOKLET:** Give the children small pieces of colorful paper to staple together as a small booklet, or to tie the pages together with a hole punch and yarn. AUTHORITY can be written on the cover and each page can have a word or a picture of people IN AUTHORITY in their lives. Make sure that JESUS/GOD is pictured or written in the booklet!

**AUTHORITY CROWNS:** Give the children supplies to trace and cut out a KINGS CROWN. "GOD'S AUTHORITY" or other words from the lesson can be drawn on the decorated crown, using sequins and glitter as well. The crown is a symbol of one who is in authority—such as a king. Remind the children that Jesus is the King of Kings and God has given him ALL authority.

**AUTHORITY PUZZLE:** Provide construction paper and stickers and bright colored markers for children to write GOD'S AUTHORITY on the paper. Each child will then cut their sheet into a few pieces to create a jigsaw puzzle and place their puzzle into a sandwich bag. They will then pass their bag to another classmate and TIME the children to see who can put their puzzle together the quickest.

**AUTHORITY COLLAGE:** Give the children magazines or newspapers or old books to cut out words or pictures that show people who are in authority. They will use these to make a colorful collage to hang in the classroom. Encourage the children to make a colorful edging "frame" and use stickers to enhance their collage.

**FRAMED AUTHORITY:** Give the children some craft sticks to make a frame. Each child will be given a piece of heavy card stock on which they will trace the word AUTHORITY with colorful markers and decorate their picture to be framed. Let the children paint or use markers to color the craft sticks as well and allow to dry during class-time!

**SING A SONG:** HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS; MY GOD IS SO GREAT